

Maintaining Friendship in Dating and in Marriages

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Abstract

This article attempts to encourage young men and women that are experiencing dating problems and couples who are already married to put into practice the suggestions laid down therein on how they can maintain friendship. Issues that are discussed range from how friendship begins and how it can be maintained whether in dating and marriage. Friendship has been identified as beginning by attraction. Friendship is defined since it is the main ingredient of the article. Then it borrows the guidelines Adam and Eve the first couple of the Bible on how they maintained friendship throughout their marriage. It also outlines number of reasons; daters should begin with friendship before actual dating is experienced. From here the characteristics of true friend is analyzed. Thereafter types of friends are distinguished. Finally friendship in actual marriage is dealt with. In conclusion friendship is important in both dating and married life otherwise dating will not lead to marriage and marriage will not make marriage successful.

Keywords: Friendship, Dating, Marriage.

The Beginning of Friendship

Friendship between a man and a woman begins with an attraction. This may be the person one would get married to in the future. The man may be attracted to the physical looks of the woman and then will find a way of befriending the woman.

Many men and women get attracted to each other as they meet, but friendship does not take place there and then because of various reasons. The first reason could be that the man or woman one is attracted would be married. It is not good to propose love to someone who is married. Other people would not mind but if one does it he/she is guilty breaking the Law of God which states: "Do not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14, Life Application Study Bible). The second reason is failure to get the friendship going despite several attempts to do so. The one who is interested tries to propose friendship, but the one being proposed refuses. There is no need to keep on pleading because love and friendship cannot be forced. The third reason is the unlikeable personality or character of the individuals. The closer these people are becoming, the more they discover their personalities and characters. If personalities and characters do not click, there would be considerable distance that would make friendship not to continue. The fourth reason is distance between a man and woman trying to start the friendship. Sometimes distance becomes a stumbling block, while other times it does not infringe on the relationship. Generally speaking if a man and a woman live in faraway places, friendship usually does not continue even if they are attracted.

Beginning of Attraction

The place where people meet is not important but the individuals found in it are. There is within them something that makes them get attracted to each other. Hirschhorn (2014) explains the researchers' findings on how attraction develops as follows:

Researchers have demonstrated that that heart-pounding feeling of being in love is driven by norepinephrine, which is chemically related to adrenaline. Dopamine, found in the brains of people who are addicted, is also involved. And serotonin goes down. The level found in lovers is the same as that found in people experiencing obsessive compulsion. No wonder partners both obsess about the loved one and idealize the person (p. 221).

There is nothing wrong with getting attracted to one another between a man and woman. If attraction was not there between men and women, there would be no marriage at all. God put in every human brain the chemistry that causes them to be attracted to the opposite sex. Researchers are correct when they say that attraction begins before friendship because they are just discovering what God himself put in human being when he created them. Adam was attracted when he made this remark after God made Eve for him He said: "At last!" "She is part of my own flesh and bone! She will be called 'woman' because she was taken out of a man" (Genesis 2:23, Life Application Study Bible). Spence & Exell add to say: "Love for the bride is one of the signs which God vouchsafes of his approval of a marriage; the bride's affection for the

bridegroom is another; while a third is the approbation and the blessing of the parents of both, p. 54.” From this moment Adam started befriending the woman whom God gave him. In Genesis 4:1, the Bible says: “Now Adam slept with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When the time came, she gave birth to Cain, and she said, “With the LORD’s help, I have brought forth a man! If Adam and Eve were not friends, they would not have sex together. Sex takes place between a man and woman who are friends with each other. They start by being friends with each other.

What Was Adam and Eve’s Secret in Maintaining and Enduring Friendship in Their Marriage?

Every young man and woman in a dating relationship and every adult man and woman in marriage would like to know the secrets of Adam and Eve’s friendship before and after their marriage. Some might not want to draw from ancient times. They might start thinking that past lessons or principles are not applicable to modern times. It really depends on who was guiding Adam and Eve even if many years have gone by. It was actually God who originated their marriage and he is the one who conducted the first marriage between Adam and Eve. With this information, God’s principles and counsels are timeless and the one who puts them into practice would not error, but would be successful in whatever he does. Let’s learn from Spence and Excell as they unfold Adam and Eve’s secrets. They argue that:

God is the best maker of marriage. Nay, unless God unites there is not real marriage, but only an unhallowed connection, legitimized by man’s laws, it may be, but not sanctioned by God’s. As this wedding was of God’s arranging, so likewise was it of his celebrating. What celestial benedictions were outbreathed upon the young and innocent pair, as they stood there before their Maker, radiant in beauty, tremulous with joy, full of adoration, we are left to imagine. Happy they whose nuptials are first sanctioned and then celebrated by the living living God!

God is the best counselor and guide in all phases of human life. He unleashes the best advises that cannot be compared to anyone. Spence and Excell further explains that: This first marriage was certainly something more than a social or a civil contract; something other than a union of convenience or a diplomatic alliance; something vastly different from a legalized connubium. P. 54).

Definition of Friendship

What is friendship? Hirschhorn D (2014) defines friendship as a: mutual giving, valuing, respecting, joy (p. 221). She further explains mutual friendship has to be a two way street. You

are generous to each other with your time, your ideas, and your feelings. You value what's in the other person's head and what that person is. You respect one another, always, even if you get angry. And there's joy in being together.

It is true that friendship is a mutual arrangement, the persons in a friendship tries to please each other. The activities they put up are for the benefit of each other. One of the friends can come up with an idea, he/she shares with the friend and then both freely discuss on how it can be implemented. They both agree on the modalities, thereafter they can proceed on the way forward. No one force anything on the other when people are friends and each one is strives to make the other person happy. These efforts of unselfishness cause friendship to keep growing and if it is for young man and woman this will lead them one day into a romantic relationship then later into marriage.

Riker A.P and Brisbane H.E (1992) give three definitions of friendship worth consideration. 1. I can talk to you about anything. I don't worry that you'll judge me or give up on me. I can depend on you to listen with an open mind (p. 189). A friend is someone you can talk to about anything. A friend does not judge or misinterpret what the other friend says. A friend listens more than talking. This creates comfort ability between them and improves their self-esteem. They do not have regrets afterwards on what they have been sharing because they trust each other. There is freedom between the two to share and pour out their feelings.

2. Riker, A.P and Brisbane, H.E also argues that when everyone else believed the rumors that were going on around and talked about me behind my back, you stood up for me. You gave me the benefit of doubt (p. 189). This definition illustrates the meaning of a true friend. A true friend does not follow the negative things masses say about their friends. Friendship is deeper than the happenings about their friends. Some people will try to cut their friendships because of what they have discovered about those they are relating to. Some however do not listen because they only see genuine in what their friends do. Sometimes they confront their friends on what they hear, and their discussion in most times increases their relationship because they share their deepest experiences.

Last definition of Riker A.P and Brisbane H.E (1992) says I can always count on you to keep a secret (p. 189). This is the goal of friendship share and to have the assurance that the things shared do not go to the third person. They really trust each other.

Reasons Daters Should Begin With Friendship

Given below are eight reasons why daters should begin entering friendship. Why is it important for daters to begin with friendship? Amanda K (2016) explains why friendship is an important experience before marriage takes place. The first reason she gives is that there is "No first date nerves." She explains further that "Dating a friend means you don't have to worry about

attractions, because you are probably already comfortable and familiar with the person. You don't have to spend hours picking the perfect outfit or prepare what to talk about beforehand."

The second reason Keaton, A (2016) when he says: "You know their past." It is true when people are friends that they disclose to each other about everything about themselves including their backgrounds. Friendship is built on a plain platform; no one is greater than the other. Each one without reservations is ready to share any information that will improve friendship. Therefore, if this friendship turns into marriage, it will avoid a lot of guess work because they already know each other's past. It becomes easy to build on what they know about each other as they venture into the future of their marriage. They will avoid hovering in darkness like those who did not know each other before marriage.

Keaton, A (2016) gives the third reason, which is just "fun." She is writing from her experience that when you date a friend there is a lot of fun and excitement. The onlookers will not know when friendship has turned into romance. By the time they realize, they are already deep in their romantic experiences and even ready to announce the month and the date the wedding would take place. They will be shocked and wonder how they abandoned friendship into romance. The issue is not when, but it is that when you are dating a friend, there is a lot of fun.

Ibid (2016) gives the fourth reason which deals with the romantic side of friendship. She does indicate that it is a bit difficult to move from friendship to the romantic side of a relationship. However, in her experience she wrote this: "Trust me; it's just as amusing as meeting for the first time. You see a whole different side of them, and it even makes them more attractive." The shift has moved from friendship to the romantic side of the relationship. The usual experiences will take place, first is the attractiveness of each other, secondly, the romance aspects sink in. The friendship is over now and begins the attractiveness.

The fifth reason is comfortability. According to Keaton, A (2016): "There is no awkward silence or difficulty trying to come up with something to talk about. You're probably comfortable communicating to each other and there are no worries about doing or saying something that you're uncomfortable with. I mean, we do go to our friends when we need to talk, right?" They can move back and forth from friendship to romance depending on the circumstances because their romance began as friendship. They can even joke a bit to each other because they know each other as friends. They feel very comfortable to communicate and to relate to each other, since they are longtime friends.

Keaton, A's sixth reason is "you can take things slow." She further states that: Dating a friend is also a good way to take things slow and really build a strong relationship. You already know you have things in common with this person, so you don't have to worry about that part. This helps you to stress less about situations and reduce feeling overwhelmed. There is also no much competition because they already know each other and then take time to focus on real issues that can build long lasting friendship in a marriage setting.

The seventh reason Keaton, Ashe points is “they are reliable” and “Knowing that you are friends first makes it easier to rely on that person. If you can’t trust them, they shouldn’t be your friend in the first place.” Friendship usually breakdown if there is no reliability. Friends must rely on each other for friendship to thrive. Therefore, to marry a friend is advantageous because you already know how reliable he/she is to you.

Lastly, Keaton A brings the point of “you are friends!” She explains: “Finally, the last advantage of dating a friend is simple: you’re already friends! May be even best friends. You already know and like each other. Everyone wants to be in a long-term relationship with their best friend.” This means that friendship which started before dating is continuing in dating and will do so in marriage. It is easier to build on what you already know than to start romantic love with someone you do not know. This is one of the reasons why marriages should not be arranged by parents. In African tradition marriages were arranged by parents. The parents of the young man would look for a woman for their son to marry. They would first to survey among families that were stable and exemplary in the community they lived. Once those families are identified, a search for unmarried women would begin. When the woman is found, the parents of the young man would ask the parents of the woman if they would allow their son to marry their daughter. Once they agreed the marriage would be arranged. It is at the time of marriage that attraction, friendship and relationship begin. Arranged marriages are not good because friendship does not start with being in a relationship by the man and woman.

Characteristics of a True Friend

What characterizes a true friend? Riker, A.P and Brisbane, H.E (1992) give three characteristics of true friends. The first characteristic of a true friend is that “A true friend understands your needs” (p. 190). There is a difference between needs and wants. Needs are things that you cannot do without in life for example food, water, air, health, etc. Wants are things you can live without wants like car, watch, etc. The issue here is not really the differences between needs and wants, but the main point is that a true friend is one who provides the most important need in your life. For example, if you are sick, you need someone to take you to the hospital, a friend will be there to do that for you. He/she will even provide the most needed things during your sickness like food, water, drinks, etc. Such a one is a true friend!

The secondly characteristic of a true friend according to Riker, A.P and Brisbane, H.E (1992) is one who is there even in difficult times. They state: “True friends are still there to face life’s challenges and help you through difficult times” (p. 190). They do not abandon you when you are in crises, but will be there in difficult times to ensure that all your needs are attended to.

Thirdly, the other characteristic of a true friend according to Riker A.P and Brisbane H.E (1992) “does not mean that you agree all the time. Good friends owe it to one another to be honest about their feelings. Good friends may agree to disagree. Maintaining your own individuality, views, and values is no problem with real friends” (p. 190). There is no room for pretense when

it comes to true friends. People become friends the way they are without trying to make some adjustments.

Lastly, the final characteristic of a true friend according to Riker, A.P and Brisbane, H.E (1992) is the one that deals with how friendship develops. It goes like this: "As friendship develops, true friends find ways to esteem others, or make each other feel important" (p. 190). Any normal human being would appreciate a friend who esteems and makes him/her feel important. This would be more meaningful in a marriage setting because most of the problems are centered on lack of esteem for each other. If married couples can try to esteem others in their relationships, they would eliminate many troubles.

Types of Friendships

According to Riker, A.P and Brisbane, H.E (1992), there are three types of friendships. The first one is called casual acquaintances. This type of friendship is sometimes called speaking friends. There is no commitment in this type of friendship. They only greet once a while when they meet casually in a place. Friends do not plan a trip to go and visit such friends because there is no relationship that would necessitate such an arrangement.

The second type of friendship is called "close friends." This type of friendship involves trusting one another. Friends share a variety of experiences which sometimes are common in their lives. There is commitment in their friendship because sometimes they share deep secrets. They feel free to share their frustrations about life to their close friends.

The third type of friendship is "lifelong friends." This type of friendship stretches from childhood friendships to present time. These have been friends for many years that is from the time they were young to the time they are adults. There is commitment and one can even travel to meet a friend.

Maintaining Friendship in Dating

Friendship between dating and married couple can only thrive when both parties make effort to do so. These should be based on what the other, that is meeting emotional needs suitable to them. Harvey Jr. (2001) defines emotional needs as a craving that, when satisfied, leaves you with a feeling of happiness and contentment, and, when unsatisfied, leaves you with a feeling of unhappiness and frustration. This craving for certain emotional satisfaction from a friend is normal. For example if a boyfriend or a husband appreciates the delicious meal she had prepared, she will feel happy and becomes encouraged to cook more delicious meals in future. Her emotional need of being appreciated has been met just by the kind words said by her boy friend or husband respectively.

There are several emotional needs that can be used to maintain friendship between a man and woman may get married to each other someday. One of these needs is care. Merriam dictionary defines “care” as effort made to do something correctly, safely, or without causing damage.

The other thing that can be done to maintain friendship is placing value on your friend or partner. Goldsmith (2001), a psychotherapist wrote something worth considering. He says if someone feels valued he or she, will do the best they can to keep your opinion of them high. The statement above is very true; no one would blossom in an environment where he/she is not valued. This is why in the African setting if a married lady is valued by her husband, she will automatically gain weight. She will not look thin and pale. And if she is not valued by her husband, she will automatically lose weight and sometimes would look pale, and immediately this happens, the relatives will worry and eventually they will send an inquiry to the husband to find out why the wife is looking weight. Placing value on the other person maintains friendship. In fact if both man and woman value each other, love relationship described in a song by McNaughton J. H (1892) that says Time doth softly, sweetly glide. In other words, time seems to move fast when love is flourishing in marriage. Even if you have been married for forty years, it seems like you had gotten married some few years ago.

Right attitude is another ingredient that can help maintain friendship among dating or married couples. Merriam (1828) defines attitude as a way of thinking and behaving that people regard as unfriendly, or rude, etc. Here we are talking about right attitude and not just attitude. Deducing from the definition, right attitude is a way of thinking and behaving that people regard as friendly, or supportive. Friendship needs right attitude. There are people in this world who are negative about everything. Sometimes what causes the inability to solve issues or problems that come by in life? There is a solution to each problem and it does not come naturally, it must seek for sometimes engaging other people to help. In cintonga language; there is a proverb that says that “one finger cannot crush lice.” We always killed lice using two fingers especially the thumbs. Developing a positive attitude towards friendship in marriage or outside marriage helps to grow happiness.

Sharing is another practice that can maintain friendship. I had a friend sometime back in high school whose parents were well to do. Every time we returned to school after holiday, he would bring a lot of food. He would share this food with me almost throughout the quarter. The ability on his part to share food with me kept our friendship high. In Deuteronomy 25:4, the regulations on treading oxen about eating are worth consideration: “Do not keep an ox from eating as it treads out the grain”. Why was this rule given? It was given out of the spirit of sharing. It would not be good for the ox to starve while seeing food as she trodden on the grain. Denying the ox from eating would be regarded as stinginess. For example it would be stingy on the part of the owners of the house to deny a maid who cooks food in the house for them. The friendship between us and our workers has continued for long time. Any other friendship would continue growing if sharing is a way of life.

Character can also enable friendship to flourish. What kind of character do the people in friendship display or have? Are they honest and impeccable in character? It is very interesting that even a prostitute would not want to marry a man who is a sexual deviate. She would want to marry a man who is of substance, a man with good character. A man too, who is a sexual deviate would not want to marry any of the loose ladies he was having sex with before marriage. When he wants to marry, he would look for one who is honest. The question is how one can find an honest partner. The story of the Prophet Samuel to anoint David as King sent by God is worth considering. Samuel wanted to anoint Eliab because of his stature. But God forbid him from doing so because he is not the one God had chosen. God had chosen David, not because of the looks but because of his good character. In 1 Samuel 16: 7, God said, "But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't make decisions the way you do! People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at a person's thoughts and intentions.'"

The principle of character in maintaining friendship can be implemented by taking time to learn the kind of friend you have. Take time in friendship to learn the kind of a friend you have. Do not rush, observe and see if your friend is honest. A person who is honest or dishonest is not difficult to know. The type of character, he/she has will be eventually seen as you relate with each other. If he/she is an abuser, the abusive behavior will be seen. If the signs of bad character show up they would be indicators of whether the friendship should continue or not. Sometimes, people in friendship tend to overlook those danger signs, they end up getting married. And a few months later, they divorce. This is because they did not put into consideration the principle of character. Daters should not marry the thigh, but marry the person. Character is more important than anything else in marriage. If you want to marry for the sake of sex or outward beauty, go to the streets in Lusaka where prostitutes line up in the evening to look for men passerby.

Friendship requires commitments. Merriam (1828) defines commitments as "a promise to be loyal to someone or something. Friendship requires some degree of loyalty from the people involved in order to survive. Many friendships fail because there is no commitment. Friendship works with effort and degree of commitment.

The golden rule in Matthew 7:12 enable friendship to flourish. It states: "Do for others what you would like them to do for you. This is a summary of all that is taught in the law and the prophets". Everybody wants to be treated fairly regardless of circumstances. Friendship requires the implementation of the golden rule. It does not require lectures after lectures; it requires practicing the golden principle. Doing the acts or deeds to others the way you would do to yourselves is very important.

Friendship in an Actual Marriage Experience

Once a man and a woman are married, their friendship shifts from mere friendship to real friendship. Friendship in dating is based on the surface. There are no issues that the couples

have to crack on in order to survive. There are few or no rules to abide with in dating and those that are there, they are not rigid. In marriage friendship is not natural, it is made to happen. Responsibilities are expected in marriage. Marriage does not require irresponsible people. For example the money the husband and wife earn is not to be spent individually; it is money for both, and therefore it should be used responsibly by considering all the needs and wants of the family. In the process of doing this, friendship sometimes is soar. Selfishness must be put aside. It is not I but we.

Weasley, A (2007) lists twelve suggestions on how “to cultivate a stronger relationship with your spouse.” This means that friendship which started during courting or dating is going to continue in marriage. 1. Recognize that friendship takes a lot of work – and time. Cut the fat out of your day. Weasley, A (2007) uses a quote from Amy his colleague in explaining the first suggestion as follows: “We’ve made some significant concessions for the sake of our friendship. Phil lives close to his work so that he can come home for lunch as often as possible. The short commute has improved his mood and energy.

Marriage is hard work. Hard work in the sense requires allocating time for each other and making all efforts for it to survive. As young couples, it is important to allocate time for your spouses. Dobson J. (2000) had the same concern when he was discussing a number of Great marriage killers, he says:

Over commitment and physical exhaustion: Beware of this condition. It is especially insidious for young couples who are trying to get started in a professional or in school. Do not try to go to college, work full time, have a baby, manage a toddler, fix up a house, and start business at the same time. It sounds ridiculous, but many young couples do just that and are then surprised when their marriage fall apart. Why wouldn’t they? The only time they see each other is when they are worn out! Husbands and wives must reserve time for one another if they hope to keep their love alive.

It is really ridiculous to be more commitment to employment than your spouse. There is need to strike the balance between the spouse and employment, especially when the children are born. Maids are not the owners of the children in that day and night are the ones who take care of them. The parents leave early to work before the children are woken up and they come back late in the evening when the children are already asleep. The couple itself cannot have meaningful romance relationship because they are physical tired. If this kind of over commitment to work continues, marriage will not be successful. There is need to evaluate themselves quickly before it will be too late. One spouse will have decided to stop work until the children are grown. We had to do this in my family. My wife stopped working for few years until the children were grown up.

2. “Establish a time each week to spend quality time together – then guard that time with your life!” The emphasis here is to have time for each,-other that is time for the husband and wife.

The two of you should set aside time for each other. There is a tendency these days for spouses to take work home. When will they work? They will most likely rob the time for family in the evening when they come from work or in the morning before they leave for work. This is dangerous and should not be encouraged at all. Evening and morning, and sometimes weekends must be allocated time for the family. It is time to make up the lost time at work during the week.

3. Choose to spend time together rather than apart. This may mean sacrificing good things for a season such as small groups, ministry, or bonding time with guys or gals. This counsel is so important that it also prohibits seemingly good deeds such as witnessing for Christ to be put aside instead of robbing time for the family. Witnessing for Christ is crucial but should not be done during the time allocated for the family. In fact is essential first, to minister to each other as spouses before you attempt to minister to others. We should put our houses in order before we get caught up with problems of other people.

4.: Explore the interests of your spouse be it baseball, art, musical theater, gardening or hunting. Find out what they are passionate about and then join them. Often this takes a bit of sacrifice. Harley, Jr. (2007) suggests that the couple lists some recreational activities they are passionate about and therefore select the ones both can participate. Here are his actual suggestions:

When the inventory is completed, the activities that have been rated enjoyable by both husband and wife are identified. This exercise usually produces a list of ten or fifteen activities the wife and the husband can enjoy together. In the weeks to come I ask them to schedule these activities into their recreational time. Some of these choices will be things he may like a bit more than she does, and vice versa, but in every case, they will both be depositing love units as they spend recreational time together.

Ibid (2007) further gives a caution that no one can do everything he or she would like in life. There's just not enough time. Every person's recreational time amounts to making choices that will leave out other opportunities, p. 87).

Bill (2007) adds: "I intentionally study the things that are having an influence on my wife. If she takes up a new area of interest, or is reading a new book, then I need to do that as well."

5. Take time to find common interests and then engage in them. John (2007) says:

We've tried many things together over the past 35 years. We enjoy cooking and gardening, and for as long as I can remember we take time away from the kids to backpack during summer. Part of the fun is doing research on hiking trails, camp sites, packs, tents, and cooking stoves ... it's the planning together that has grown our friendship.

Here the emphasis is not just on finding common interests, but engaging in those activities together. If for example your spouse and you like research, you can spend time in the evening

and weekends to research. Research engages and even the discussion is centered on that. It is important to find other activities that interests both husband and wife.

6. Conflicts in marriage are not all bad. Weasley, A (2007) points out to say use conflict to sharpen and purify friendship. Whenever there is a conflict, it is an opportunity to improve relationship especially those of marriage. For example, in me and my wife's marriage, whenever my wife cautions me not to eat too much, I defend myself that am not eating too much. But later on a realization steps in and immediately I adjust. The anger I displayed when she was telling me is now gone. I face the reality and eventually I apologize for sharp reaction. I eat more vegetables than meat and I look healthier and energetic. Andi (2007) adds:

I thought I was particularly fortunate because my husband and I rarely argued – we agreed on almost everything. The process of recovering from adultery revealed unhealthy communication on both our parts. Now we have more disagreements, but they come about because we've being honest with one another, which is helping us get to know each other more all the time."

7. Nourish and care for one other. Be gentle with one another." Glen (2007) explains: "We lost our first child. We more than comforted one another. We held each other ... lifted one another up ... and we knew at a deep level that our best friend in the world was going through the same thing.

What is to nourish and to care for each other as spouses? According to Merriam's (1828) dictionary nourish means: "to provide (someone or something) with food and other things that are needed to live, be healthy, etc." In the context of marriage nourish would mean providing security, emotional support, financial support, food, etc to your spouse so that he/she experiences healthy and happiness. In other words to nourish is to support each other as spouses in order to achieve what you did not have before marriage. To care according to Merriam (1828) means: "things that are done to keep someone healthy, safe, etc." If nourish and care are in a marriage relationship, the couples concerned will never want to separate. They will always want to be together. At this time it reminds me of one colleague of mine who used to tell me that every time he visited his parents in law with his wife, his wife would not remain with her parents, she always came with him. The reason she did this was because he nourished and cared for her.

8. Accountability and mutual respect, including in the areas of sexuality, finances, and relationships, should be priorities. George (2007) his colleague wrote: "My wife knows everything about my brokenness. I have gone to her first in difficult situations. There's a small circle of people who know me and know my depravity. My wife is in that circle. Having that transparency has given me strength, clarity, and tremendous freedom."

It is important to be accountable especially as spouses to each other in terms of sexuality and finances. Merriam (1828) defines accountability as: "The quality or state of being accountable; especially: an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions." With the rampant of sexual diseases such as HIV Aids, it is important to be faithful to each other.

HIV/Aids aids are real and have claimed thousands of lives. It is important to be faithful to each other because it increases sexual fulfillment when there are not worries of unfaithfulness and transmitting sexual diseases from one partner to the other.

9. Establish daily habits, especially praying together. Justine his colleague adds: "Praying together every morning not only sets the tone for our day, and releases the burdens on our hearts, but it puts us on the same page in so many areas. God meets us in the midst of our friendship every morning." Prayer invites God in the family who is capable of solving any problems. Dobson J (2007) has this concern: "A personal relationship with Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of marriage, giving meaning and purpose to every dimension of living."

A prayerful life does not only help the couple who practices it, but also the children, who observe the way it is done. They learn from the way parents pray. Dobson, J (2007) elucidates: "Children should grow up seeing their parents on their knees before God, talking to Him." These children who are brought up by Christian parents are fortunate because what they learn from parents in a practical way will be inculcated in their lives forever.

Dobson, J (2007) keeps promoting prayer in marriage as a solution to many problems. As a result of this, he says: it is impossible to overstate the need for prayer in the fabric of family life." In other words prayer is important and must be practiced in every family especially these days that married couples are under the attack of the evil one. The evil one according to the Bible is busy disrupting marriage because he knows that time is almost there for his destruction. He does not want to be destroyed alone, therefore, he targets married couples by accusing them that prayer does not work and that it is not important.

10. Affirm one another every day. Be intentional in communicating the other's strengths. His friend Al (2007) says my wife and I make it a habit to regularly communicate those things we admire or value in the other. This practice has strengthened our friendship." It is true that affirming one another and being intentional about appreciating one another in marriage, improves friendship. One of the ways I appreciate or affirm my wife every morning is to greet her and to tell her that I love her. Sometimes I give her a hug as I declare I love you. These simple words set the pace for the day for her and for me. I feel good to share the love I have to her and she also feels appreciated. I feel encouraged to do it each day. It has become now a way of life. There are many other things we can do to affirm our spouses, we just need to be creative and resourceful.

11. Be transparent with one another. There should not be practices that are haze between spouses. Money for example should not be spent secretly away from each other. This should be applicable even in helping relatives. Before any relative is assisted, the couple must discuss the need to assist and both of them should approve the expenditure. It is advisable to open a joint bank account so that the monies that are banked and spent are known by both the husband and wife.

Bill (200) admonished as follows:

One activity I suggest to married couples is, at some point during the day; identify an emotional reality to your spouse. Label that feeling and in a self-disclosing way such as 'I'm angry, fearful, resentful.' We often limit our conversation to the reporting of event rather than communication how we really feel.

The goodness with self-disclosing is that it cannot be challenged because it is based on how a person feels inside himself/herself. It is the best way of informing your spouse that you are unhappy about something your spouse has done. For example if your spouse belittles you and it upsets you, you can react in this way: "I feel humiliated by the comments you made this morning about me." The other person cannot argue because the speaker is talking about himself. He cannot be challenged because he is talking about how he feels. The best way to handle his feelings is to apologize for having said those humiliating words to him. He will be relieved because his spouse heard and sympathized with his condition.

12. Communication. Most experts agree that regular communication build a friendship that weathers the storms of life. Life unfortunately has storms of all kinds. How do you manage them? Every human being has to manage the storms of life through meaningful communication with the people they differ with. Issues or conflicts between and among people unfortunately do not solve themselves. The causes or symptoms of conflicts must be identified and sorted out through good communication. Without communication conflicts would be left unattended and in marriage would end up having couples who are physically married but psychologically divorced. Jason (2007) says:

For us, communication, in part, is negotiating the rule that will make our relationship work better or flow more smoothly. For example, just recently, I had the implicit assumption that my bike tools should be placed on the kitchen table. My wife, Annie, challenged this assumption, and conflict arose. By the end of our negotiation, we had made a new rule: bike tools do not ever go on the kitchen table. It sounds silly, but her demand felt like a threat to how I operate, and therefore a threat to my personhood, my masculinity. In that encounter I had to learn that I was no less Jason, no less a man, no less a person, to concede to my wife's demands that certain spaces are set aside for certain purposes. My personhood goes beyond and deeper than that.

The experience of Jason and Annie is a big lesson to all of us. Jason though at first thought that he had lost personhood. He allowed himself to be told by his wife Annie where bike tools must be kept. Annie was right to insist that bike tools do not stay on the kitchen table. It took time for Jason to comprehend Annie's suggestion, but later on he understood. New rules of communication were established between the two so that next time a similar issue appears; it would be tackled in the similar manner.

Marriage is a good environment for molding couples. Early in my marriage I thought that everything I told my wife she would agree. I thought as a man and husband she would just obey me without questioning my leadership at home. It did not take long with this type of thinking. My wife too needed to be respected. She challenged me on many things. I resisted but later on I found out that I was not heading anywhere. I wanted the marriage and learnt a lesson of humility. I wanted to please my wife and I respected her and she also in turn respected me. Today, we are thirty-five years in marriage and we are still smiling. If I had continued on that path of demanding and commanding my wife to do certain things, we would not have reached this far in marriage. I thank God who humbled me and I am now feeling great for having lived in marriage for so many years.

Conclusion

For a man and a woman to date successfully into marriage, friendship must exist. For married couples to continue in marriage throughout their lives on earth, friendship must exist. If friendship fails in one way or another, then dating will not lead into marriage and marriage will not be a long lasting one. It is therefore important for the unmarried young men and women to put into practice the techniques on how to maintain friendship. It is also important for the married couples to make efforts in internalizing the suggestions on how to boost friendship in marriage.

I will conclude by telling the two experiences, one involving a young man and woman who never married in spite of dating for a long time, and the other one is the experience of a couple who divorced even if they were married for a long time.

The first experience involved a young man and woman who dated for a long time. They dated for two years. In the process they started having sex and the woman got pregnant. The young lady told the fiancé but to her surprise he did not accept that he was the one responsible and started accusing her of unfaithfulness. Later their friendship soared and the young man refused entirely. They took each other to court, but because the young man had a lot of influence, and the girl lost the case. The plans for marriage did not continue. They ended up being bitter enemies. Friendship cannot continue where there is bitterness, lack of trust and lack of appreciation for each other.

The second experience involves a mature couple who were married for more than twenty years but ended up divorcing. They were both working in the city and even reached retirement age. At the time of retirement the issue of where they would stay became a problem to both of them. The husband wanted to retire in his home place Western Province, but the wife wanted to retire in the same city they were working from. It became a heated discussion and in the process friendship weaned. The husband went to Western Province alone and built a house there for retirement. The wife did not go with him; she found a place to stay with her relatives in the city. After a few years they filed for divorce in court and after many appeals divorce was sanctioned.

Friendship had vanished and there was no comprise, marriage came to an end. Marriage cannot survive without friendship.

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